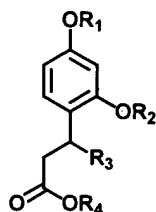


WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A cosmetic method of skin lightening comprising applying to the skin a composition comprising:
- 5 a. about 0.000001 to about 50 % of a compound of general formula I (I)

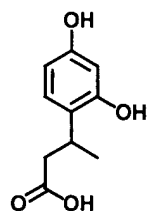


- Where each or both R<sub>1</sub> and/or R<sub>2</sub> represents hydrogen (H); linear or branched, saturated or unsaturated C<sub>1</sub> – C<sub>12</sub> alkyl, alkenyl, acyl, or heteroalkyl groups;
- 10 R<sub>3</sub> represents linear or branched, cyclic or acyclic, saturated or unsaturated C<sub>1</sub> – C<sub>12</sub> alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, or heteroalkyl group;
- R<sub>4</sub> represents a hydrogen atom (H); straight or branched, cyclic or acyclic, saturated or unsaturated, containing or not containing a heteroatom C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>22</sub> alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, heteroalkyl, aryl, or heteroaryl group;
- 15 and
- b. a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

- 20 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said composition further comprises a sunscreen.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said sunscreen is a micronized metal oxide.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein said compound is a 4-methyl 7-hydroxy coumarin derived resorcinol derivative.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said compound is a compound of formula II:

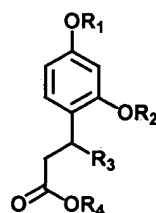
(II)



6. The cosmetic method of claim 1, wherein R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> both represent hydrogen.
7. The cosmetic method according to claim 1, wherein said composition further comprises a skin benefit agent selected from the group consisting of alpha-hydroxy acids, beta-hydroxy acids, polyhydroxy acids, hydroquinone, t-butyl hydroquinone, Vitamin C derivatives, dioic acids, retinoids, resorcinol derivatives, and mixtures thereof.
8. The cosmetic method of claim 1, wherein said composition further comprises an organic sunscreen selected from the group consisting of Benzophenone-3, Benzophenone-4, Benzophenone-8, DEA, Methoxycinnamate, Ethyl

5 dihydroxypropyl-PABA, Glyceryl PABA, Homosalate, Methyl anthranilate,  
Octocrylene, Octyl dimethyl PABA, Octyl methoxycinnamate (PARSOL MCX),  
Octyl salicylate, PABA, 2-Phenylbenzimidazole-5-sulphonic acid, TEA  
salicylate, 3-(4-methylbenzylidene)-camphor, Benzophenone-1,  
Benzophenone-2, Benzophenone-6, Benzophenone-12, 4-Isopropyl  
dibenzoyl methane, Butyl methoxy dibenzoyl methane (PARSOL  
1789), Etocrylene, and mixtures thereof.

9. A cosmetic composition comprising:
- 10 a. about 0.000001 to about 50 % of a compound of general formula I:
- (I)

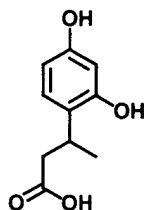


- wherein each or both R<sub>1</sub> and/or R<sub>2</sub> represents hydrogen (H); linear or branched,  
saturated or unsaturated C<sub>1</sub> – C<sub>12</sub> alkyl, alkenyl, acyl, or heteroalkyl groups;
- 15 R<sub>3</sub> represents linear or branched, cyclic or acyclic, saturated or unsaturated C<sub>1</sub> –  
C<sub>12</sub> alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, or heteroalkyl group;
- R<sub>4</sub> represents a hydrogen atom (H); straight or branched, cyclic or acyclic,  
20 saturated or unsaturated, containing or not containing a heteroatom C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>22</sub> alkyl,  
alkenyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, heteroalkyl, aryl, or heteroaryl group; and
- b. a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

10. The cosmetic composition of claim 9, wherein said compound is a compound of formula II:

(II)

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11. The cosmetic composition of claim 9, wherein R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> both represent hydrogen.

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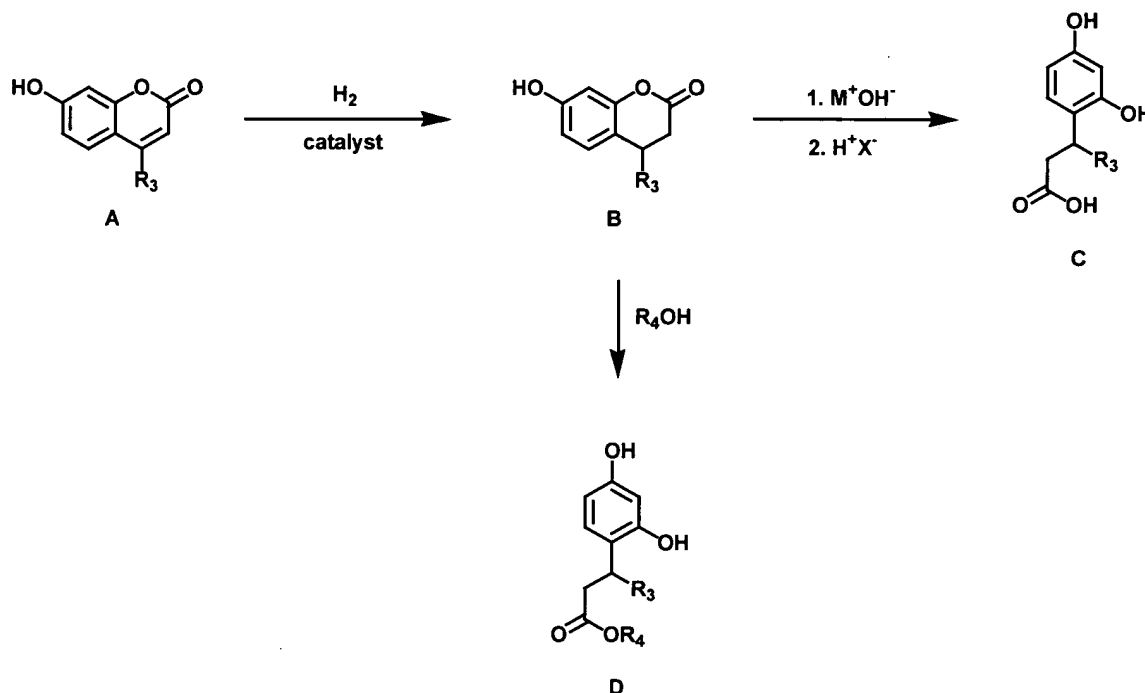
12. The cosmetic composition of claim 9, wherein said compound comprises about 0.00001 % to about 10 % of said composition.

13. The cosmetic composition of claim 9, wherein said compound comprises about 0.001 % to about 7 % of said composition.

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14. The cosmetic composition of claim 9, wherein said compound comprises about 0.01 % to about 5 % of said composition.

15. A process for making compounds having a general formula selected from the group consisting of B, C, D, and mixtures thereof, comprising:



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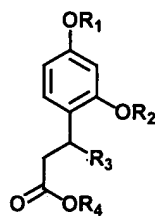
wherein

$R_3$  represents linear or branched, cyclic or acyclic, saturated or unsaturated  $C_1 - C_{12}$  alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, or heteroalkyl group;

10  $R_4$  represents a hydrogen atom (H); straight or branched, cyclic or acyclic, saturated or unsaturated, containing or not containing a heteroatom  $C_1 - C_{22}$  alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, heteroalkyl, aryl, or heteroaryl group.

16. The process of claim 15 further comprising substitution of the 1,3-hydroxy positions of the phenyl ring to yield compound of general formula I:

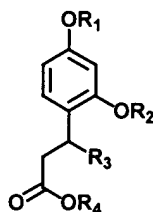
(I)



5 wherein each or both R<sub>1</sub> and/or R<sub>2</sub> represents hydrogen (H); linear or branched, saturated or unsaturated C<sub>1</sub> – C<sub>12</sub> alkyl, alkenyl, acyl, or heteroalkyl groups.

17. A compound of general formula I

(I)



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Where each or both R<sub>1</sub> and/or R<sub>2</sub> represents hydrogen (H); linear or branched, saturated or unsaturated C<sub>1</sub> – C<sub>12</sub> alkyl, alkenyl, acyl, or heteroalkyl groups;

R<sub>3</sub> represents linear or branched, cyclic or acyclic, saturated or unsaturated C<sub>1</sub> –  
15 C<sub>12</sub> alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, or heteroalkyl group;

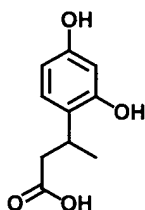
R<sub>4</sub> represents a hydrogen atom (H); straight or branched, cyclic or acyclic, saturated or unsaturated, containing or not containing a heteroatom C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>22</sub> alkyl, alkenyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, heteroalkyl, aryl, or heteroaryl group.

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18. The compound of claim 17, wherein said compound is a compound of formula II:

(II)

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15 19. The compound of claim 1, wherein said compound is a 4-methyl 7-hydroxy coumarin derived resorcinol derivative.

20. The compound of claim 1, wherein R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> both represent hydrogen.